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Good Evening Chairpersons and Members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Melinda Montovani and I have the privilege of working for the **Brain Injury Alliance of CT (BIAC)**, where we provide services to the entire state of CT.

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS. In his proposal, the Governor seeks to reduce funding for the Services for Persons with Disabilities line item, which includes the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut, by 20%.

I have worked at the Brain Injury Alliance of CT and have been receiving calls to our Helpline for the past 11 years. I speak with individuals with brain injury, family members, and professionals. Every one of these callers has a story. All the stories speak of lives altered forever by injury to the brain. I hear their story and work with them to find support and services to move forward.

Additionally,

- For 35 years, BIAC has received an operating grant from the Department of Social Services to provide *entirely free* resources and supports which the State is unable to provide.
- The Department of Social Services contracts with BIAC to provide services required as part of the Medicaid ABI Waiver program. **The contract with BIAC is used as evidence in several sections of the Waiver application showing that DSS is meeting the obligations of this federal program.** BIAC's responsibilities *according to the ABI Waiver Application submitted to the Centers for Medicaid Services (CMS)* include:
  - Supporting the participant in Service Plan Development and providing information regarding participant direction
  - Disseminating information to the community related to brain injury.
  - Facilitating free monthly support groups throughout Connecticut
  - Statewide toll free support number, providing consultation and resource facilitation for persons who have sustained a brain injury, their families, caregivers and providers
  - Training and community education programs
  - Through BIAC, information about the identification and reporting of abuse, neglect is disseminated to clients, families, and their representatives.

A 20% reduction in funding would severely impact BIAC and the services they provide to the community. Please maintain funding for the Services for Persons with Disabilities line so that BIAC can be there for those who need them most. I appreciate all the support you have given us in the past and ask for your continued support.

Thank you.

Melinda Montovani  
West Hartford